

Application No. 10/763,724
Amendment dated March 1, 2005
Reply to Office action of December 15, 2004

REMARKS:**Status Of Claims**

Claims 1-16 were previously pending in the application. Claim 14 has been amended. Thus, claims 1-16 are currently pending in the application with claims 1, 8, and 14 being independent.

Office Action

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 14-16 have been allowed. It should be noted that claim 14 has been amended to correct a typographical oversight and therefore should not be considered a limiting amendment.

The Examiner also indicated that claims 2 and 7 would be allowable, if rewritten in independent form. While the Examiner did not address claim 13, the Examiner previously indicated that claim 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In the office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5, and 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Funk et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,681,176 (the '176 patent). The Examiner also rejected claims 4, 6, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Funk et al., the '176 patent, in view of Funk, U.S. Patent No. 6,650,997 (the '997 patent).

Applicant respectfully submits that the '176 patent is not a valid reference with respect to the present application. Specifically, the present "application is a continuation of U.S. Application Serial No. 10/365,171, filed February 11, 2003, which is incorporated hereby by reference, and which is a divisional of U.S. Application Serial No. 10/028,057,

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filed December 20, 2001, now Patent No. 6,545,637", as stated in the amended Related
Applications section of the present specification. Therefore, the present application's
effective filing date is December 20, 2001.

In contrast, the '176 patent's effective date as a 35 U.S.C. 102(e) reference is its
May 2, 2002 filing date. Therefore, the '176 patent's effective date as a reference is after
the present application's effective filing date. As a result, the present rejections cannot be
sustained. However, Applicant reserves the right to challenge the present rejections on
other grounds, should that prove necessary.

Any additional fee which is due in connection with this amendment should be
applied against our Deposit Account No. 501-791. In view of the foregoing, a Notice of
Allowance appears to be in order and such is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By:



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